

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 02893 290939Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-13 OMB-01
TRSE-00 EB-08 DHA-02 ACDA-07 MCT-01 /082 W
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O P 271049Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 553
INFO AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY
AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DACCA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY
CINCPAC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 2893

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. THE RESULTS OF THE HARTAL (WORK STOPPAGE) CALLED BY THE
OPPOSITION FOR MARCH 26 APPEAR INCONCLUSIVE. IN LAHORE, TWO
MAJOR MARKETS WERE COMPLETELY CLOSED AND MOST SHOPS ELSEWHERE
ALSO SHUT DOWN. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRANSPOT GENERALLY FUNCTIONED
NORMALLY. HERE IN PINDI PERHAPS THREE FOURTHS OF THE STORES
WERE CLOSED DOWN, BUT TRANSPORT SEEMED NORMAL. THE SITUATION
ELSEWHERE IN THE KEY PUNJAB PROVINCE IS UNCLEAR. A GOVERNMENT
PRESS NOTE MAINTAINS THAT THE HARTAL CALL DID NOT EVOKE ANY
SIZEABLE RESPONSE IN THE PROVINCE, BUT THE PRO-OPPOSITION DAILY
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 02893 290939Z

NAWA-I-WAGT REPORTS THAT THE STRIKE WAS VIRTUALLY COMPLETE IN
THE LARGE PROVINCIAL CITIES AND WAS WIDELY OBSERVED IN SMALLER
LOCALITIES. WE HAVE NOT AS YET BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN ANY INDEPEND-
ENCE EVIDENCE TO HELP US SORT OUT THESE CONFLICTING ACCOUNTS.

2. THE ARMY WAS CALLED IN TO ASSIST CIVIL AUTHORITIES IN MULTAN,
PUNJAB'S THIRD CITY, AND IN THE NEARBY TOWN OF KHANEWAL. THE

ARMY ALSO ASSISTED IN PATROLLING LAHORE. THE PROVINCIAL CAPITAL REMAINED QUIET, BUT A PUNJAB GOVERNMENT PRESS NOTE STATES THAT FOLLOWING ATTACKS BY DEMONSTRATORS POLICE OPENED FIRE IN SELF-DEFENSE IN KHANEWAL AND AHMEDPUR EAST, A TOWN IN BAHAWALPUR DIVISION. THE NOTE STATED THAT ONE PERSON WAS KILLED IN KHANEWAL AND THAT THREE "CASUALTIES" OCCURRED IN AHMEDPUR. BOMB EXPLOSIONS WERE REPORTED IN THE CITY OF JHANG AND IN THE SATELLITE TOWN AREA OF RAWALPINDI. A CHILD WAS KILLED IN JHANG; NO CASUALTIES WERE REPORTED IN PINDI. FURTHER ARRESTS WERE REPORTED FROM VARIOUS PLACES.

3. THE HARTAL WAS LARGELY SUCCESSFUL IN KARACHI, BUT VIOLENCE, WIDELY ANTICIPATED, WAS SCATTERED AND LIMITED. THE ARMY ACTIVELY PATROLLED THE CITY. THE CONSULATE GENERAL THERE HAS HEARD REPORTS THAT A COUPLE OF PEOPLE WERE SHOT. A FEW STONINGS OF VEHICLES OCCURRED, BUT PRIVATE VEHICLES GENERALLY CONTINUED TO PLY. AS IN PREVIOUS HARTALS IN KARACHI, PUBLIC TRANSPORT WAS LARGELY CLOSED DOWN, SHOPS MOSTLY CLOSED, AND OFFICES POORLY ATTENDED. RUMORED PNA PLANS TO DISRUPT AIRPORT OPERATIONS DID NOT MATERIALIZE. THE CONSULATE GENERAL BELIEVES THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO LIFT THE CURFEW IN KARACHI'S CURFEWED AREAS FROM NINE A.M. TO FOUR P.M. BEGINNING TODAY (SUNDAY) REFLECTS THE GENERALLY SATISFACTORY SITUATION WHICH PREVAILED ON THE HARTAL DAY. (AS OF MIDDAY SUNDAY, KARACHI SEEMED NORMAL.)

4. CONSULATE GENERAL KARACHI ALSO TELLS US THAT IN HYDERABAD, TOO, THE HARTAL WAS LARGELY EFFECTIVE. THERE WAS LESS VIOLENCE THERE THAN ON OTHER HARTAL DAYS. THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER
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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 02893 290939Z

PROVINCE APPEARED GENERALLY QUIET.

5. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN, ACTING PNA CHIEF, MET WITH OTHER INTERIM ALLIANCE LEADERS MARCH 26. AT A LAHORE PRESS CONFERENCE THE SAME DAY, HE THANKED THE PEOPLE FOR WHAT HE TERMED THE COMPLETE SUCCESS OF THE HARTAL, AND SAID THAT THE PNA WOULD CONTINUE ITS PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS AND PROCESSIONS. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE HAD SENT A CALBE TO THE PAKISTAN PRESIDENT ASKING THAT THE ARMY BE REMOVED FROM ALL AREAS WHERE IT IS STATIONED BEFORE A RIFT DEVELOPS BETWEEN IT AND THE PEOPLE. HE SAID HE DOES NOT WANT THE ARMY TO BE MALIGNED BUT IT WILL BE IF IT CONTINUES TO HELP THE PRO-PPP BUREACURACY.

6. WHILE THE HARTAL WAS GOING ON, THE NEWLY ELECTED NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HELD ITS INITIAL SESSION IN ISLAMABAD. THE PPP AND TRIBAL MEMBERS TOOK THEIR OATHS, AND THEN CHOSE TEN WOMEN AND SIX MINORITY REPRESENTATIVES TO FILL THE RESERVED SEATS. ALL SIXTEEN SELECTED WERE OF COURSE PPP CANDIDATES. THEY INCLUDED, AS A SIND WOMAN REPRESENTATIVE, THE PM'S WIFE, BEGUM NUSRAT BHUTTO.

THE PPP PARLIAMENTARY PARTY REELECTED ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO AS ITS LEADER AND NOMINATED MERAJ KHALID, A FEDERAL MINISTER IN THE OUT-GOING BHUTTO CABINET, AS ITS CANDIDATE FOR SPEAKER. NO OPPOSITION MEMBERS WERE PRESENT DURING THE PROCEEDINGS. THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRIME MINISTER (IT WILL OF COURSE BE BHUTTO) IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY.
BYROADE

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